



## Parent Liaison News

Newsletter #7. If you want to receive this electronically please let me know. It is my intent that you may find the following information of interest and perhaps useful for discussion during Parent Advisory

Committee meetings or for your newsletters. Please copy and share!

### **Proposed Rules & Public Comment**

Public comment period has ended. All comments were to have been received before October 1, 2001 at 5pm.

The OSE/EIS staff is working on a Question & Answer document. Release of this document is planned for within one month. I will see that all PAC's (and everyone else on my mailing list) receive this information.

See Web Sites of Interest section for a further reference.

### **Macomb County is making School Wide Positive Behavior Support happen!!**

Submitted by Geralyn Friedrich, Macomb PAC Chairperson

School Wide Positive Behavior Support is a system change in environments that produces better learning for all students. It is not difficult to implement and costs little money. PBS is about making safer schools and helping reduce problem behavior by reducing office referrals. PBS recognizes good student behavior and changes the environment to teach expected behavior. PBS is data driven and proven to be effective in schools with high office discipline referrals.

Last fall, I joined the state PBS Sustained Learning (hub 3) where I was trained on the PBS process. I hooked up with Dr. Mike Nolan, Macomb Intermediate School District Behavior Consultant. Joining us this year is Scott Parsons, Social Worker for Roseville Public Schools. The three of us make an awesome team for PBS!

This August, the three of us held a 'Summer Institute' for 6 schools on school wide PBS. Currently, Mike and I are training

7 schools in the L'Anse Creuse Public School District. And, soon will be starting training for the Centerline School District. This training supports districts by developing a process by which local school teams implement multiple levels of behavioral support which benefit general and special education students.

Dr. Nolan brought a model from Florida where he was part of an extensive PBS team. The 3-day trainings were the first of its kind in Michigan! In the 3-day trainings the teams build a comprehensive system of behavior support, develop a school wide model that teaches students building level expectations, and plan for implementation. Support is given to these schools by Mike, Scott and myself. We have a web site that the schools can access for support. Scott is our Data collector and as the parent I give support to the schools by speaking to PTOs and getting parents on board to help support the school wide plans.

School Wide Positive Behavior Support works on strategies that are preventive, provide social problem solving options instead of punishment, and offer respectful and dignified ways to ensure the safety of all students.

If you would like more information on Macomb Counties School Wide PBS efforts, please call Dr. Nolan at the MISD at 810-228-3344 or call Geralyn Friedrich, Parent Trainer in the PBS process at 810-771-4457.

### **Disability Mentoring Day**

Taken from Michigan Department of Career Development – Monday Bulletin 00175

Disability Mentoring Day is officially recognized on October 24.

#### What is it?

Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) is a national effort to promote the employment of

students of people with disabilities through the time-tested success of personal mentoring. DMD began in 1999 as part of a White House effort to increase the profile of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, celebrated every October. DMD began with just three dozen student participants. Last year it expanded considerably to include the participation of over 250 students, 17 federal agencies, and over two dozen national businesses in 14 states and Washington, DC.

#### How is it coordinated?

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is the National Host of Mentoring Day. The U.S. Department of Labor and the Presidential Task Force on the Employment of Adults with Disabilities are the National Public Sponsors. AAPD is providing national leadership by encouraging employers, students, educators, and organizations to get involved; recruiting, training, and supporting Local Coordinators; developing resource materials and how to plan DMD activities; referring individuals to published lists of Local Coordinators and participating employers; and generating media attention.

#### How can your community get involved?

Local Coordinators, who play a matchmaking role between students and local employers, are the key to DMD. If you are an employer, organization, educator, or student interested in participating as a mentor or student participant, contact the AAPD to learn if a Local Coordinator has already been established in your community. If your community does not have a Local Coordinator, contact local leaders to build support for one and identify possible candidates. Communities interested in setting up a DMD event should then contact AAPD for information about designating a Local Coordinator. There is no required size for a successful event – it could involve just a handful of students or several dozen.

#### How do students benefit?

DMD enables students to spend part of a day visiting a business or government agency that matches their interests and have one-on-one time with volunteer mentors. It's an opportunity to underscore the connection between school and work, evaluate personal goals, target career skills for improvement, explore possible career

paths, and develop lasting mentor relationships.

#### How do employers benefit?

DMD provides public and private employers with an opportunity to help promote the employment of people with disabilities, learn more about the experience of disability, develop lasting relationships with disability community leaders, tap a pool of potential future employees, demonstrate positive leadership in their communities, and attract positive media attention.

Contact Jonathan Young or Jessa Steinbeck at 800/840-8844 or at [aapd@aol.com](mailto:aapd@aol.com) for additional information. Resource materials will soon be available on AAPD's web site ([www.aapd-dc.org](http://www.aapd-dc.org))

What a big project for your PAC to take on and help organize!

### **Selecting and Adapting Toys**

The season for gift giving will be upon us very soon.

The following is from the Center for Persons with Disabilities. Copied with permission.

The variety of toys available for our children today seems almost overwhelming. Many toys, however, are not designed for children with special needs. The following guidelines can help narrow the selection to toys that are developmentally appropriate, mentally and physically stimulating, and adaptable for children with special needs.

Toys become fun when the developmental design of the toy is matched to the developmental stage of the child. To assure that a toy will be fulfilling and fun, the following questions should be considered:

- Is the toy appropriate for your child's motor abilities (ability to handle) and cognitive (thinking) abilities?
- Can the toy be adapted to meet your child's specific needs?
- Will the toy require your child to use a variety of skills?
- Will the toy provide your child with a sense of control over his/her environment?
- Will the toy be useful in combination with other toys?
- Will the toy remain interesting as your child grows older?

- Can your child use the toy to play with others or take turns with it? Will they talk (or interact) as they play?
- Can your child use the toy alone or will someone always be needed for assistance?
- Is the toy stimulating, but not overwhelming?
- Will the toy minimize the effects of disabilities?
- Will the toy be challenging, but not frustrating?

Toy safety is another important concern. Government regulations prevent many dangerous toys from being distributed, but toys which are safe and appropriate for one child may be very dangerous for another. Safety concerns are often developmentally based. Parents should be cautious of sharp corners, wood that may splinter, painted surfaces that may be chipped and eaten, small removable parts that may be swallowed, or moving parts that may pinch fingers.

Toys are only fun and useable if they can be reached, grasped, and properly handled. They must be accessible. Better access might mean putting handles or knobs on a toy or increasing the size of existing handles by wrapping them with tape or by plain a foam rubber hair roller over the end. For children who have a weak grasp, Velcro can be attached to the fingertips and palms of mittens or gloves to help the child securely grasp and manipulate toys. Another suggested adaptation is to attach magnets to items such as cards, pictures, or toys. The items can then be placed upright on a cookie sheet. The child can push, prod, and move the items in all directions.

There is a manual that has instructions on how to adapt toys. *Designing and Constructing Adaptive Equipment Using Your Desktop*, available from CPD Outreach, Development, and Dissemination Division. Call 435-797-7011 for ordering information.

The National Parent Network on Disabilities (NPND) in partnership with the National Lekotek Center and Toys "R" Us have a Toy Guide. The Toys "R" Us guide is available at no cost and may be ordered by calling 617-471-1570 or be emailing [npnd@cs.net](mailto:npnd@cs.net). Requests for the Toy Guide

for Differently Abled Kids should be available now.

### **Request for Information**

I have a request from a local PAC for any by-laws, letters you use, info on how and who you formed, etc. Any information you have about your local PAC would be greatly appreciated from one who is struggling.

### **From the Early Childhood Digest March 1998**

Taken from the Early Childhood Digest web site.

Even though this is several years old, I still found it interesting but sad that this is still an issue today. It is from Early Childhood but really reaches across all ages.

#### **Families and Teachers as Partners**

Children, families, and schools all benefit when families and teachers work together. However, many families do not know how to work with teachers, and while teachers need to know how to work with all families, most do not get enough training. It is not surprising then that many teachers and families don't know how to reach out to each other. Some teachers do not know how to talk with families or how to invite them to help in the classroom. Likewise, many families feel ill at ease with teachers or are afraid to talk to them or to enter the classroom.

All parents and family members want to help their young children succeed in school. By working together with schools and teachers, families can help their children succeed. Below are some questions that family members can ask themselves to begin to meet teachers halfway:

- *What is my relationship like with my young child's teacher or caregiver?* To strengthen your relationship with your child's teacher, call to plan a meeting or to set a time to talk on the phone. Be sure to share what you expect your child to learn. Ask about your child's school work and behavior in preschool or school. (This could be done at the IEP Team meeting.)

- *How do I find out what the school expects from me and share what I want for my child from the school?* Families and teachers often come from different cultural backgrounds, which can make it hard to know what to expect from each other. Let your child's teacher know what you do at home to help your child learn and what you want your child to learn in school. Also ask what the teacher expects you to do in the school or with your child.
- *How can I help my young child at home?* You can ask your child's teacher for suggestions about learning activities that you and your child can do together at home.
- *What can I tell my young child's teacher about my child?* You are the expert about your child. Think about your child's interests, talents, and challenges. Share this information with your child's teacher so that the teacher can help your child learn.
- *How can I be most helpful to the school or early childhood program?* Let your child's teacher know what your interests and skills are, such as sewing, cooking, woodworking, or computers. Also let the teacher know when and where you are available to help. Ask about the kinds of help that are most needed.
- *How can I help educate teachers?* Think about how you can help teachers learn to work as partners and become better teachers. Help form a mentorship program at your school that includes a segment about families and relations. You could help change school policies and practices by joining the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) for special education.

What does my child's teacher need to know? (Mentorship?)

- About families – who they are and what they want for their child
- How to involve families in their child's learning
- How to talk with families
- How to support families in helping their child learn at home
- How to involve families in the classroom and school

- How to support families' interests and needs
- How to share decision making with families
- Respect and value different cultures

Next issue – Communicate and be comfortable in the school.



### **WEB Sites of Interest**

Check out [gpspeciald.home.att.net/](http://gpspeciald.home.att.net/) for a local school district SEPAC which is online.

[www.state.mi.us/orr/intro/prom\\_process.htm](http://www.state.mi.us/orr/intro/prom_process.htm)

Please check out this site for a narrative form of the rules promulgation process. Information found here could be useful to explain this often confusing process.

[www.Michigan.gov](http://www.Michigan.gov)

Citizens, businesses, tourists, and other customers now have a dynamic new way to find information or obtain State of Michigan services on the internet. It's the State's new Web site launched by Governor Engler on July 10. Using the new site, visitors can interact with the State online 24 hours a day, seven days a week, rather than wait in line during usual office hours. The site also simplifies the process you use to find information, obtain forms and publications, and obtain answers to questions. You can find what you need within a few mouse clicks without having to know which agency provides a specific service. The site employs a search engine that allows you to search Web sites of all our State agencies at once.

[www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

Founded in 1977, the PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights) Center, which is supported in part by OSEP (U.S. Office of Special Education Programs), is a parent training organization that is based on the concept of parents helping parents. Many of the publications are available on their web site and are also available in Spanish and Hmong.

[www.taalliance.org](http://www.taalliance.org)

In addition to being a parent information center itself, PACER also directed the OSEP funded Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers (the Alliance) which provides technical assistance to the 90 federally funded Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) and Community Parent Resource Centers in each state. CAUSE (the Citizens Alliance to Uphold Special Education) is the PTI in Michigan. They have information available. Toll free number is 888/248-0822

[www.fape.org](http://www.fape.org)

PACER was recently awarded one of the OSEP IDEA Partnership Projects. Called FAPE (Families and Advocates Partnership for Education), the project links with other parent training information centers and national organizations to inform families and advocates about IDEA.

[www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY). Funded by OSEP, NICHCY is charged with providing families with information to make informed decisions about their child's education. Parent contact NICHCY to find out more about educational opportunities and how to get their children the services they need. In addition to collecting and sharing information, NICHCY answers questions, links people with others who share common concerns, published information, and maintains a database of referral resources. NICHCY's resources can be downloaded directly from its web site which last year logged more than one million visitors. Many of their products are available in Spanish and alternate formats.

[www.npin.org](http://www.npin.org)

The National Parent Information Network is a project of the ERIC system that is administered by the National Library of Education in the U.S. Department of Education. Their mission is to provide access to research-based information about the process of parenting and about family involvement in education. They believe that well-informed families are likely to make good decisions about raising and education their children.

Have you visited the MDE-OSE/EIS web site lately? We keep it updated and have lots of information that you may find helpful. We have lots of links to other sites also. Back issues of the Parent Liaison News can be found there also.

[www.mde.state.mi.us/off/sped/](http://www.mde.state.mi.us/off/sped/)

### **Conference Dates and Information**

Growth for Families Conference  
October 19-20, 2001  
Troy Marriott

Michigan Rehabilitation Conference  
October 29-31, 2001  
Grand Traverse Resort  
Traverse City  
Contact Harry Smith at MARO  
517-484-5588

Learning Disabilities Association (LDA)  
Annual Conference "Lighting the Way"  
November 12-13, 2001  
Kellogg Center, East Lansing  
Contact: LDA 888-597-7809  
Email: [ldami@aol.com](mailto:ldami@aol.com)

Region II Second Annual Assistive  
Technology Consortium Conference  
"SETting the Stage for Success with  
Assistive Technology"  
Presented by Joy Zabala  
Friday November 16, 2001  
Horizons Conference Center  
6200 State Street  
Saginaw, MI  
Contact: Sheri Pelletier  
989-673-5200 ext. 433  
989-673-5201 Register by November 2,  
2001

### **A Publication that may be of interest**

ACCESS Matters Fall 2001  
This is produced by Project ACCESS,  
Michigan's Assistive Technology Resource  
(MATR), and the Awareness and  
Dissemination hub of Michigan's State  
Improvement Grant (SIG), Project ACCESS  
is a state discretionary project awarded by  
the State Board of Education.



This is an excellent newsletter for families dealing with technology issues for their children. Nice to have your PAC signed up to receive a copy to have as a resource working with families.

You can receive this newsletter electronically if you prefer. You can also copy and share articles giving proper credit.

Contact:  
Michigan's Assistive Technology Resource (MATR)  
1023 South US 27  
St Johns MI 48879-2423  
800-274-7426  
989-224-0333  
989 224-0330 fax  
e-mail: [matr@match.org](mailto:matr@match.org)  
web: [www.matr.org](http://www.matr.org)

### **Comments from the Parent Liaison**

I have included some information that I have been picking up from various PAC's. If you have any information please send it and I will try to copy and share. What is your PAC doing? Let's share and give ideas to others!

I am interested in attending your PAC meetings. I would love to hear about your PAC and the discussions that you have around issues. I have attended several and even some local PAC meetings across the state.

If your PAC has a newsletter or if you have some back copies on hand, please send them to me and ask that I get added to your mailing list. I know that several PACs do newsletters and really would like to have the opportunity to promote the hard work that you do in producing your newsletters.  
Thank you!

Does your PAC membership include voting members from organizations? Which ones? How do you define membership? How long are your terms for the PAC? These are some of the questions that I frequently hear. If you have the time, please let me know what you do. I appreciate the information.

As always, I am happy to hear from you. Let me know how your PAC is doing.  
Any questions? I will try to find the answer!

Thank you for reading and sharing!

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